OBJECTIVES

You will be able to:
- use online resources to help you read Latin documents
- learn basic Latin grammar in order to determine relationships
- read Latin documents at a basic level

Usefulness

Latin has been the language of the Church for centuries and many records were written in Latin, either in toto or in part. Being able to read Latin gives you access to the information in many records.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Latin is an Indo-European language, which means that it is related to English, German, Russian, and number of other languages, mostly found in Europe and in a swath that reaches into India. It is the mother language of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and a few other languages, which we designate as ‘Romance. English has borrowed thousands of words from Latin and the other Romance languages, especially French. This has changed the vocabulary of English tremendously and has led some people to believe that English is descended from Latin. Such is not the case. English is a Germanic language, mostly closely related to Dutch, Frisian, German, Afrikaans, and the Scandinavian languages. However, the borrowing of so many Latin-based words into English makes reading Latin much easier for the English speaker than it would have been had such borrowing not occurred.

Here is how to search a webpage for a specific word:

On a PC press the ‘control’ button and hold it down while you press the ‘F’ button. Depending on the browser you use, a box will appear at the top right, left, or bottom left. Type a word or any letter string, i.e. part of a word, into the box. That letter string will then be highlighted. If there is more than one occurrence of that string, such will be indicated and you can click the arrow to find each occurrence.

On a Mac it’s the command and f button at the same time.

Dictionaries, word lists and other aides:

1. FamilySearch Latin Genealogical Word List
This is the site to start with when looking for genealogical terms. It includes subsections for topical vocabulary items, such as numbers, key words, and abbreviations. The general word list is Latin to English.

2. Google Translate https://translate.google.com/

This is an easy-to-use site. You can search either Latin to English or English to Latin.

3. How to decline personal names

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/reference/how-to-decline-personal-names/

This site shows you the many endings in all the cases of personal names. One caveat—in the first declension genitive and dative this site gives the simplified ending –e where you would normally see ae or æ.


This is a wonderful dictionary with many terms. Of particular importance is that it gives the various declensions of the items, including given names. This will help you understand the grammar.


This is more a word list than a dictionary. It is genealogically oriented. It also gives diseases at the bottom of each letter’s page, which can be very helpful when determining the cause of death.


This a very good dictionary that translates from English to Latin.

Other aides:


This encyclopedia will give detailed explanations of many terms dealing with the Catholic church. To increase your understanding of cultural items, see this encyclopedia.

You will often encounter various abbreviations in your documents. The following two sites will give the expansion of the abbreviations, which means that you will still have to translate the terms to a language that you understand.

8. Wörterbuch lateinischer und deutscher Abkürzungen des späten Mittelalters und der Neuzeit

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/58434-redirection

9. Dizionario di Abbreviature Latine ed Italiani This book appears on two websites. Try them both and see which you like more.

https://archive.org/details/CappelliDizionarioDiAbbreviature

http://www.hist.msu.ru/Departments/Medieval/Cappelli/

You will often encounter symbols, usually as part of a date, that are unfamiliar to you. Often, these are symbols for days of the week. See this site to learn what those symbols mean.

**Part 1: Dictionaries, Word lists and other aides:**

**Activity 1**


Do a control F (or command f) search for these words and write all the different Latin words that you find for each English word.

Objectives of this activity:

1. You will become familiar with the FS Latin word list
2. You will learn how to search using the control F feature
3. You will learn many Latin vocabulary items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Godparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Homework</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2:

Objectives of this activity:

1. You will become familiar with the various word lists and dictionaries that you will need
2. You will learn many Latin vocabulary items

For this activity, look at the document and see if you can recognize any of the cognates. Can you more or less make out what is being said in this document?

Now, use these sites to look up each of the following words. You will not find all of the words in any one site but will have to use all of them.

FamilySearch Latin Genealogical Word List  

Latin Dictionary  https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sexagesima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vespertina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>filia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nostro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hujate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2: Grammar: Cases

Latin is what we call a synthetic, as opposed to an analytical, language. This means that Latin has a tremendous number of word endings. How a noun or pronoun functions in a sentence is indicated by word endings, not by word order, as in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>This is the subject of the sentence I baptized the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>This is the ‘owner’ of an item. In English, we often indicate this with ‘s or of… The child of Thomas and Mary (or Thomas’ and Mary’s child) was baptized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>This is the beneficiary of the action, i.e. the person for whom something is done For John and Mary I baptized the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>This is the receiver of the action I baptized the child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are the most common endings for three of the five noun groups, which we call ‘declensions.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>1st declensions</th>
<th>2nd declensions</th>
<th>3rd declensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>Maria Matthias</td>
<td>Petrus</td>
<td>Joannes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>Mariae Matthiae</td>
<td>Petri</td>
<td>Joannis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>Mariae Matthiae</td>
<td>Petro</td>
<td>Joanni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>Mariam Matthiam</td>
<td>Petrum</td>
<td>Joannem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 3:
Objectives of this activity:

1. You will become familiar with the use of cases in order to determine who is doing what to whom in the sentence.
From these two documents, look up these names and tell the case and function in the sentence of each one. You can use the chart above (recommended) or these two websites:

How to decline personal names http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/reference/how-to-decline-personal-names/ One caveat—in the first declension genitive and dative this site gives the simplified ending –e where you would normally see ae or æ.

Latin Dictionary https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Barbara</td>
<td>Nominative. Subject of the sentence. The person being baptized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catharinae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthiae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 4 Translations:**

For the following documents, use the skills that you have developed and resources that you have learned to translate the following documents. For some of the documents a transcription has been provided for you to check your work. Lines will be provided for your work before the transcription so that you will focus on the document itself first and not on the transcription. Do as much as you can before you refer to the transcription.

When you transcribe or translate a document, you should stay true to the lines as they appear in the documents. This means that if there are seven lines in the original document, you should have seven lines in your transcription and translation. If you are only extracting information, which you will often do (even in these exercises), you do not need to stay true to the lines.

For these exercises do not get hung-up on the surnames and place names. Those will be dependent on the area in which you are researching. Do pay special attention to given names, though.

**Document 1**

If you are working with a baptismal record and you see the words *natus* and *renatus*, what do you automatically know about the person being baptized? What if you see *nata* and *renata*?
Mense Martio Die vigesima prima, hora 6 to matut. obiit
actata annorum septemad. decem infantis Catharina
silia legitima Nicolai Rous Barbara
Backes, conjugum in Bettingen
et post tres dies in coemeterio nostro funjate
sepultus est.

In idem A. Garisch & Eulenberg, post
Mense Aprili

Die trigesima, hora praesta vespertina obiit

actate anns unias mensium decem insns

Petru, filius legitimus Petri Bernardi et Henriciae Erbel, conjugum

in Assen;

et post tres dies in coemeterio nostro hujus

sepultus est.

In fide

Garisch Eulnbergis paster.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anus, mensis, dies.</th>
<th>Infantes baptizati, parentes, levantes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891.</td>
<td>Anno Domini millesimo octingentesimo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majus</td>
<td>nonagesimo primo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. a.</td>
<td>die vigesimo secundo obs. mensis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maji natut est et</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>die trigesima prima mensis. Maji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>baptizatus est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liciniae Angelus filius legitimus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Petri Angel et Annae Mariae Spang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conjugam in Augen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levantes erant: Liciniae Tegus et</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Spang in Augen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fidem: J. Haas par.
Die 21. hujus natus eodemque die renatus est
Joannes Hermann, filius leg. Nicolai Hermann et
Margaritae Erpel conj. Ex aussen; levantibus
Joanne Hermann et Barbara Hermann oibus ex
Aussen
Die 14a hujus natus alteraque die renatus est Godtfriad
lebmit filius leg. Godtfridis lebmit et Annæ
quinten conj. Ex aussen; levantibus Godtfride
Reiter et Anna Maria lebmit ambobus ex
weiskirchen pflüger
Document 7

Anno 1674 die 26 Aprilis horeæ tertia post meridiem
natus et die sequenti baptizatus est Joannis filii legitimi
Joannis Knechener et Margaretha Lenhof Conjuxum
ex auser. Suntque eunt Joannis Nvr et Annemaria
Lenhof ex Dethingen.

Clemens

Document 8

Before you translate the document, look at the numbers and letters in the right-hand column. What do they mean?
Document 9

[Handwritten text in Latin]
Document 10

[Handwritten text]

Document 11

For document 11 you are given an indexed version of the document as well as the document itself. Look at the index. Do you see any problem? Can you figure out what the problem is? You do not need to transcribe or translate this document.
Maria Spuria, "Hungary Catholic Church Records, 1636-1895"

- Search collection
- About this collection

name: Maria Spuria
event: Baptism
event date: 10 Sep 1851
event place: Karancskeszi, Nógrád, Hungary
gender: Female
father: 
mother: Juliana Lehoczky
line number: 623863
film number: 004659093
digital folder number: 004659093
image number: 41
19. no. februarii. coram me, et requisitis tibi sunt secundas atque
Celebrotibus conjuges jubilis nubes, Doctus Wilhelmus Matthaeus, et nuptas agat a Dorothea
1. nuptias in facie eisaldo matrimonii imcrescente nuptiam foems Georgius
1. nuptias in facie ecclesiae matrimoniae increscente nuptiam foemem Georgium
1. nuptias in facie ecclesiae matrimoniae increscente nuptiam foemem Georgium
1. nuptias in facie ecclesiae matrimoniae increscente nuptiam foemem Georgium